



17th Annual
FAMILY LEARNING WEEKEND for
FAMILIES OF Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
May 31-June 2, 2013

What: MSDB 17th Annual Family Learning Weekend for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Where: MSDB Campus in Great Falls
When: May 31-June 2, 2013
Who: Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children living in Montana!
Why: IT WILL BE FUN!!

The Learning Weekend is a creative program providing opportunities for families of sensory impaired children to learn about deafness, share their experiences with other families, and learn how to communicate more fully with one another in a warm, caring atmosphere.

The focus of the weekend is to enhance each individual's personal knowledge of deafness and how it relates to the education and development of their child. Informal workshops, group discussions (parent groups, kids' groups, siblings' groups, etc.) and hands-on activities will be offered. Child care and recreation for the children (siblings included) is available at no charge. Families will be reimbursed for mileage at the current state rate.

Housing is provided on a first-come first-serve basis. Each family is generally provided with their own suite of rooms in the cottages and efforts are made to make assignments according to individual needs and preferences. Typically each family has their own bathroom, sometimes two, depending on the size of the family. **Participants need to bring personal items such as soap, shampoo and toothpaste. Make sure you bring your swimsuit!**

Children's Programs:

The children are divided into groups based mostly on age. Many factors are taken into consideration including friendships, maturity level, and interests when putting together the groups. The children stay with their groups until they join the parents for mealtime. MSDB's finest residential and school staff will be responsible for supervising your children and making sure they enjoy the day as much as you do!

Birth to two: Children will be in the pre-school room in Bitterroot with staff. *Parents should pick up their children prior to lunch and dinner and return them to the same location when they are done eating.*

Three to five: Children will be involved in a variety of activities throughout the day. These activities will include snacks, program practice, indoor and outdoor activities including a trip to the MSDB playground (weather permitting). Swimming, with parents, in the Mustang Center will be available for this age group from 4:45–5:45. The activities for this group will remain flexible depending on the ages and abilities of the participants.

Six through eighteen: Saturday morning after the group picture, children will re-join their assigned teams which are designed for children to be involved with peers. There will be several activities including program practice, recreation activities and snacks. In addition, a representative from the Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP) will have fun projects for the children to enjoy. MTAP will talk about technology, including using a TTY, the Relay Service, etc. Also during the morning session Debbie Metge, MSDB Cottage Counselor, will meet with hearing siblings providing them an opportunity to discuss their feelings regarding having a deaf sibling. Deaf and Hard of Hearing children will meet separately to share their thoughts as well. *This information (while keeping siblings' names confidential) will be shared with the parents during the Sunday morning presentation.*

****The kids program is intended to provide entertainment and educational activities that will further the participants understanding of deafness and its impact on the family. Activities are designed for youth with hearing loss and also for their siblings. Participants are grouped by age and staff are assigned accordingly, depending on the numbers of the participants and their individual needs. If you have unique concerns regarding your child, please let us know and we will work with you to insure that everyone has a good time.*

Information from various vendors (serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing) will be available throughout the weekend.

Presenter Bios

(Several of the Presenter Bio's were NOT available at Press Time)

Cynthia Hunt is a school counselor at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES) at the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education, working with 4th through 8th grade students since 2003. She was appointed as coordinator of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program when it was implemented at the Clerc Center in the spring of 2012. Her presentation, "Bullying-What Every Parent Needs to Know" will focus on defining bullying, distinguishing between bullying and picking, and sharing tips on how to address bullying with your child. Strategies and approaches related to making reports of bullying to your child's school will be discussed. We will explore ways that you can become involved in your child's school and develop a partnership with them to preventing bullying from occurring.

Raised in Bowie, Md., Cynthia now lives with her two dogs and five cats in her hometown. As a child, she attended KDES and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf prior to graduating from Gallaudet University with her bachelor's degree in elementary education. She also received her master's degree in social work with a specialization in school social work and her EdS in change leadership in education from Gallaudet. Cynthia's interests include climbing, cycling, camping and reading.

Frank Podobnik currently serves as the State Special Education Director for the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI). Frank is the father of three sons, two of whom were students with disabilities. He began his career in education as a school psychologist in 1994 and worked in the Great Falls and Butte school districts. Frank has worked for the OPI since 2002 as a full and part-time compliance monitor, dispute resolution facilitator, IDEA grant manager, and for the last year, state director. Frank has worked with teachers, families and students with disabilities throughout his career.

Mary Koch Cline is an independent Auditory Education Consultant, providing workshops, professional mentoring and program development throughout the United States. She is a graduate of Gallaudet's teacher training program and former clinical director of an Auditory-Verbal Center, thus having a strong foundation in both sign, spoken and auditory language development in children with hearing loss. Having worked with children with cochlear implants since 1983 she is a national leader in integration of sign and spoken language appropriate to the individual's unique communication needs.

Mary moved from Maryland to the Bitterroot three years ago. She is currently living in Hamilton, MT with her husband, Jim Cline, outreach consultant to MSDB. Mary consults with the Department of Communication Sciences at the University of Montana in deafness/hearing loss/rehabilitation with Speech and Language graduate students.

Mary brings a very diverse perspective to working with children who are deaf and their families. She states that her mission is to foster connection and communication through language uniquely suited individual strengths and needs—one child at a time.

Catherine "Kitty" Griffin, M.C.S.D. CCC-SLP is a master's level speech and language pathologist. Kitty has spent her career working with families in home based and clinic based treatment. She has worked across the nation including The Helen Beebe Center in PA and the Listen Center in CO. One of Kitty's clinical specialties is working with families whose children have hearing loss. Kitty has worked for MSDB as a Family Advisor and is currently a DHH Outreach Consultant in SW MT. She is a certified Baby Signs® instructor.

Kitty is a former MT Speech Language and Hearing Association president and currently chairs the PR committee of that organization. (She likes to get the word out about services!) She also owns and operates her private practice, State of the Heart Therapy, Inc. in Dillon MT. Kitty's twins are graduating from High School this year and she will officially stop claiming that she is working on her "baby fat".

Deaf Learning Weekend 2013 Schedule

(subject to change)

Friday, May 31, 2013

- 4:00-6:00 Check in – Yellowstone Cottage.
- 6:00-6:30 Tour – Especially helpful for first time attendees.
- 6:30-7:15 Dinner – pizza, salad and dessert in the MSDB main dining room.
- 7:15-8:00 *Ice Breaker* – getting to know the participants a bit earlier in the weekend.
- 8:00-9:00 *Teen Panel* – opportunity for teens to share their experiences and answer any audience questions (this is a **must** for the parents).
- 7:15-9:00 All of the children will go to the Mustang Center to meet their “groups” and work on the program for Saturday night.
- 9:00 Pick up your kids from the Mustang Center.

Saturday, June 1, 2013

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast in the main dining room.
- 8:45-9:00 Group Picture – All Participants together in front of the big sign (each family will get a “Memory Book” at the end of the weekend to take home).
- 9:00-12:00 *“Bullying – What Every Parent Needs to Know”* – Cynthia Hunt - See bio for more details.
- 12:00-1:30 Lunch
- 1:30-3:00 *“Auditory Learning”* – Mary Koch Cline and Kitty Griffin will present information on using home activities and therapeutic games to promote listening and learning through hearing. Mary and Kitty will also focus on teaching parents and family members to identify and use situations that can be used as an auditory and language learning experience..... MOST OF ALL EASY AND FUN TO DO. Discussion and questions will be encouraged!!
- 1:30-3:00 *“Unraveling the Mystery of IEPs”* – Frank Podobnick from OPI will discuss the IEP process. OPI will have staff available throughout the day on Saturday to discuss individual questions you have related to your child. **Feel free to bring your child's current IEP for review or discussion.**
- 3:10-4:45 *Parent Groups* – will be a separate group for Moms and a separate group for Dads. This has been one of the weekend’s favorite sessions.
- 4:45-5:45 Open Swim for the families to join with their children in the gym OR just some down time prior to dinner. All children will be with their families until children’s program begins at 7:00 PM.
- 6:00-6:45 BBQ – in the main dining room.
- 7:00-7:30 *Children’s Show* – the children have been practicing all day to put on a short performance for the parents. **Bring your cameras and tissue!**
- 7:40-9:00 Parent Panel – this has also been a favorite of the weekend. Listen to parents as they share their story about their journey with their child. It is uplifting and empowering to be a part of this presentation (as a participant or a member of the audience).
- 9:30 Pick up your kids from the cottages as they will be watching movies and eating snacks

Sunday, June 2, 2013

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast
- 9:00-10:00 *Montana Telecommunications Access Program* will present about their program.
- 10:00-10:30 Break
- 10:30-11:30 *Successful Family-Adult Presentation* – Bethany Hundley
- 11:30 - *Sibling Summary* – listen to what your children have to say about having a deaf or hard of hearing sibling AND also what the deaf or hard of hearing kids think about living in a hearing family! Some surprises and thought provoking information for all parents.
- 12:00 Lunch in the dining room and then families depart



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WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT MSDB's FAMILY LEARNING WEEKENDS!

"I think every family with a deaf child should come to at least one to see if it's helpful to them – we love it and learn each and every time we come to MSDB!"

"I like that my brother feels welcome and fits in every time he is here and I support him."

"I was very impressed with MSDB in general. I had no idea that this was such a 'gem'. Montana is very lucky."

"Informative, we met a lot of amazing families, the staff was great and the kids had fun"

"Seeing all the kids together is the best part! We always learn something new that helps us with our lives!"

"The staff are great, always different options for presenters – changes every year"

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CHILDREN

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind

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